

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

1. Call to order: 4:30 p.m. Annual and Regular Meeting of April 16, 2015 at the Woonsocket Housing Authority, 679 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

David Lahousse, Chairman
Bernadette Rochefort, Vice Chairwoman
Sally Anthony
Charles Baldelli
Roger Bouchard
Marc Dubois

Attorney Joseph J. Rodio, Sr.
Patrick Morganelli
Robert Moreau
Christine O'Connor
Theresa Corbeille - absent

2. Director Morganelli welcomed new Commissioner Marc Dubois.
3. Election of Chair

Director Morganelli asked for nominations for Chairperson. Commissioner Baldelli nominated David Lahousse. Commissioner Anthony seconded the nomination.

The Secretary asked again for other nominations for Chairperson. Hearing none, the Secretary asked for a motion to close the nominations. Commissioner Baldelli made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken. The following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Rochefort

A roll call vote was taken on the nomination of David Lahousse as Chairman. The following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Rochefort

4. Election of Vice Chair

The Chairman asked for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Baldelli nominated Bernadette Rochefort. Commissioner Anthony seconded the nomination.

The Chairman asked again for other nominations. Hearing none, the Chairman asked for a motion to close the nominations. Commissioner Dubois made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken. The following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Rochefort

A roll call vote was taken on the nomination of Bernadette Rochefort as Vice Chairwoman. The following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois
Commissioner Rochefort

Chairman Lahousse clarified for the Board that Executive Director Morganelli is the Secretary of Board.

5. Good and Welfare for the Audience - none
6. Good and Welfare for the Commissioners

Commissioner Baldelli suggested that the new Director’s mission should be to enhance the reputation of the Housing Authority. The Commissioner suggested that the citizens of the City do not think that the WHA does its fair share and they need to be made aware of all of the good things that the WHA does. Director Morganelli said he is up for the challenge and commented on the WHA taking the lead to temporarily house the 38 people who lost their homes in a fire last week. He noted that he and the Chairman have also had discussions along those lines and mentioned plans to announce and celebrate the WHA’s 75th anniversary this year. Commissioner Baldelli again mentioned our image as a burden to the City to which the Director commented on stats that he is compiling to show the number of students we house (that use City services) vs. the 600+ high-rise residents that do not.

The Chairman congratulated Commissioner Baldelli on his upcoming induction into the RI Heritage Hall of Fame.

The Chairman also said, on behalf of the Board, that in their search for a new Director, the one thing they wanted was someone to work in partnership with the City, not for the WHA to be a burden, and he is confident that the Housing Authority is already moving in the right direction.

Attorney Rodio clarified which agenda items can be approved by ‘ayes’ and ‘nays’ without a full roll call vote, according to the WHA bylaws. Those items other than those of a routine nature must be voted on by a roll call vote.

7. On motion by Commissioner Anthony, seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort, the Board voted (5-0) to accept the minutes for the regular meeting of March 19, 2015. Commissioner Baldelli abstained due to his absence from the March meeting.
8. On motion by Commissioner Baldelli, seconded by Commissioner Anthony, the Board unanimously voted (6-0) to accept bills paid for the month of March 2015.
9. On motion by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort and seconded by Commissioner Anthony, the Board unanimously voted (6-0) to accept the Communications and Interest of the Authority, A-C.
10. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve and place on file for the purposes of discussion, the report of the Secretary. A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

The Director submitted his report as written highlighting that the reports are in a transition period so that the information reported will be more measurable. The management report is about halfway there. In the Procurement Report, the bid information has been revised, as requested by the Board, to indicate the top three bidders, and a recommendation to award. The reports will be transitioning from a narrative style to one of measurable indicators. The Director commented on some other transitions at the WHA; the retirement of two long-term employees with combined service over 60 years, and the start of two careers with his own and that of a Housing Data Clerk. The Director also spoke of the teambuilding activity of the "WHA Masters putting competition.

There was no discussion. The Board unanimously voted (6-0) to accept the Director's report.

11. Report of Committees – none
12. Unfinished Business - none
13. New Business –

- A. The Vice-Chairwoman asked for a motion to approve the award of contract for domestic hot water system at Kennedy Manor to the low, responsive, responsible bidder in the best interest of the Housing Authority: Delta Mechanical Contractors. A motion was made by Commissioner Dubois and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

The Chairman recused himself from this vote due to a personal relationship. Attorney Rodio noted that he represents Local 51 which is the signatory for that contract but he had no knowledge of, or involvement with this bid.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- B. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the award of contract for fire alarm systems, sprinkler & fire extinguisher testing to the low, responsive, responsible bidder in the best interest of the Housing Authority: Clarion Fire Protection Solutions. A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort and seconded by Commissioner Bouchard.
There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- C. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the award of contract for landscaping services at family developments to the low, responsive, responsible bidder in the best interest of the Housing Authority: Eastern Landscaping. A motion was made by Commissioner Dubois and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- D. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the award of contract for landscape services at high-rise buildings and Main Office to the low, responsive, responsible bidder in the best interest of the Housing Authority: 3D Landscaping. A motion was made by Commissioner Anthony and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

Vice Chairwoman Rochefort asked how much landscaping could be done at 4 high-rises for \$12,090 per year. The Director responded that in a management meeting this week there was discussion of the WHA's image and what could be done to improve it; WHA maintenance personnel will be doing landscaping work in addition to the contracted service. The Vice Chair suggested that the rear entrance of Kennedy Manor could use a sprucing up.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- E. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve payment to the City of Woonsocket for 2014 Rubbish and Recycling Tipping Fees \$39,475.07. A motion was made by Commissioner Anthony and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

Commissioner Anthony asked if the WHA is caught up with the fees to the City yet. The Chairman explained that the tipping fees were never paid because there was conflict with the prior administration and what exactly was owed. The Director explained how the amount of this payment was verified to the satisfaction of the City and the WHA. There was some further discussion amongst the Board about recycling rates and recycling efforts. Attorney Rodio suggested working with Sarah Kite at Resource Recovery. She will come to our properties and suggest appropriate recycling programs.

Commissioner Bouchard proposed a 3-6 month project. Draft a letter to the authorities of the City of Woonsocket asking for a list of services provided by the City to Woonsocket Housing Authority properties, and a list of associated costs for those services, less the expenses that we pay to the City for those services. Then we could review the list and confer with HUD to

see what we might be able to do to help the City to pay our fair share. We should promote the idea saying we want to help the City legally, within the boundaries of HUD.

The Director commented that his recent meeting with the Mayor was to deliver a PILOT check for \$203,373.13; on top of that almost \$40,000 for the tipping fees is awaiting approval. The Director has started an analysis of students and the subsidy that City receives from the State for education. There will also be a plan down the road between the Housing Authority and the City, collectively, to address reducing the student population in the City through the proposed redevelopment of Veteran's Memorial and the RAD. The Director mentioned a call from the City to see if we were interested in purchasing a property in back of the Main Office foreclosed for back-taxes, and some other properties in the City. We would be helping the City by getting some properties on the tax base and at a higher assessment. We can leverage our money to improve the property, address our mission of housing low-income families, smaller ones, and reduce the density at Veterans.

Commissioner Dubois commented that the cost of education is the critics' biggest gripe. The Director responded that his draft matrix indicates that what the WHA actually costs the City in education is about one million dollars. The Director is trying to determine how many kids are in other non-single family dwellings, maybe 3000. WHA kids are easier to count than those others that are also a burden.

Regarding other assistance to the City, the Section 8 department pays approximately \$4 million per year to landlords of Woonsocket properties who in turn pay taxes to the City. We are also tracking payroll information to see how many of our 68 employees live in the City. In fact, the WHA is an economic engine for the City, providing \$7 to \$8 million per year to the City of Woonsocket. The Director would like to tie this information into the 75th Anniversary celebrations for the Housing Authority.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

NAYS

- F. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve FY 2015 Income Limits. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

The Director stated that each year HUD publishes regional income limits. It is a matter of procedure for the Board to adopt these limits with 45 days.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- G. The Chairman asked for a motion to accept the Revised Personnel Policy/ Internet Policy and New Social Media Policy. A motion was made by Commissioner Bouchard and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort.

The Director explained that a WHA employee made an inappropriate comment on social media about the landlords of the house that burned on Ascension Street. Our current policy and our Personnel Policy do not hold anybody accountable and need to be revised. Attorney Rodio said the problem comes with freedom of speech rights; the solution (while still a gray area) is to make the personnel handbook stronger. There was some discussion amongst the Board members who were all in favor of strengthening the WHA policies.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- H. The Chair asked for a motion for approval of a Lease Addendum regarding the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). A motion was made by Commissioner Bouchard and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

The Director explained this HUD regulation which must be added to Section 8 and Public Housing leases, and be incorporated with all re-certifications. The NCHM File Audit detected this missing item which we will now be compliant with.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- I. The Chairman asked for a motion to enter Executive Session to be convened pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1)(5) for discussion of job performance and personnel matters regarding the Assistant Director of Administration & Personnel; and

Executive Session to be convened pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1)(5) for discussion of job performance and personnel matters regarding the Executive Director; and

Executive Session to be convened pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(5) for discussion of the acquisition or lease of real property.

A motion was made by Commissioner Anthony and seconded by Commissioner Bouchard. There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- J. The Chairman asked for a motion to return to open session and seal minutes in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws sec. 42-46-4 and 42-46-5. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

- K. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the amendment to Executive Director Morganelli’s contract and the amended duties of the Assistant Director of Administration & Personnel. A motion was made by Commissioner Anthony and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Dubois

14. Adjournment

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli at 6:26 p.m.

Roll call vote was unanimous.

Patrick A. Morganelli
Executive Director